



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Missouri's Public Health System *at a Glance*



The Missouri public health system is in action every day, in every county of the state. It assures our children are immunized, that plans are in place for emergency and disaster management, that infectious diseases are detected and curtailed, that drinking water quality is monitored and that restaurant food is safe.

Your health depends on public health.

Public Health and You

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7:00 a.m.



Family breakfast

Your breakfast eggs came from a local grocery store, which we regularly inspect for safe food handling practices. You mix your frozen juice with tap water. If you have a private well, we help you maintain it properly and obtain water quality testing.



Children back to school

Your children need more than book bags and pencils as they head back to school after summer break. They need their vaccines. Vaccines are available at your local health department and may be free through the Vaccines for Children Program.

At school, the health department helps keep your children safe. It inspects cafeterias for food safety and responds to disease outbreaks. It also helps identify children's health care needs and provide services, including preventive dental care.

7:40 a.m.



Dropping baby off at child care

You arrive at the child care facility with the assurance that the learning environment is safe, sanitary and free of lead hazards. County and state risk assessors, licensed by the state health department, have inspected the facility and tested for the presence of lead paint and lead hazards. The state and local health departments also help many child care facilities improve the nutrition of the meals they serve and the health and safety of children attending.



Going for a walk or bike ride

You and your best friend decide to take a walk, now that the kids are back in school and the walk route is clearly marked. The state health department provided a grant to your local health department to install crosswalk signs to make walking safer. Crosswalk signs and street markings make walking or bike riding much safer and easier in your community. “Livable streets” are part of a growing trend in communities across the country, especially in rural areas.

10:00 a.m.



Recall of cantaloupe

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues a national recall of cantaloupe. You wonder if the affected cantaloupe is in your community. You contact the local health department for answers and learn that the state health department issued a health advisory about the national recall. They advise that if a family member recently ate cantaloupe and develops diarrhea, fever or nausea, he or she should be tested.



Lunch with friends

Local public health departments inspect restaurants and encourage them to offer and identify heart-healthy choices on their menu. The state health department and local health departments work together to help the restaurant industry meet rigorous sanitation and food handling standards to keep you well.

3:30 p.m.



Flooding threatens community's health

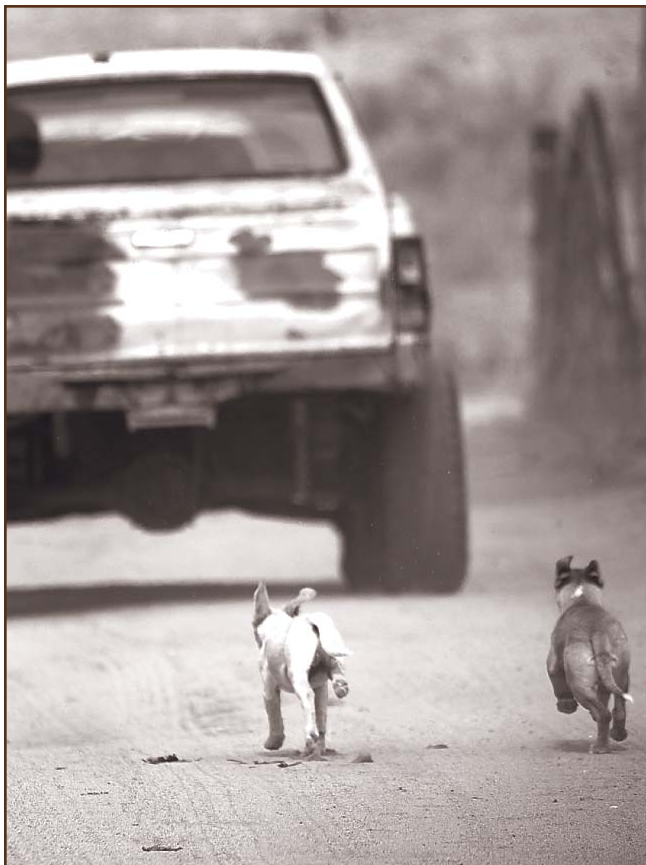
You hear a news story about rising flood waters in parts of your community. Public health responds by giving immunizations for people exposed to flood water, and as flood waters recede, assuring safe water and food. By using the active surveillance and response systems already in place, and through appropriate vector control, public health prevents the spread of diseases caused by flood waters.



Elderly parent becomes ill

Your mother enjoys a buffet at her assisted living facility. Hours later, most people who ate the meal become ill. The local health department suggests a medical evaluation for those individuals and works with the facility to test the buffet food and water. They also interview everyone who dined, including those who do not become ill. When the illness becomes widespread, the local and state health departments work with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration to discover the cause.

6:30 p.m.



Son bitten by stray dog

A stray dog bites your son as he plays in the front yard. After working with local animal control to catch the dog and place it in confinement, you contact the local health department to find the dog's owner and determine whether the dog has had a rabies shot. The health department also refers you and your son to a medical provider to get proper wound control and rabies-prevention shots if necessary. The State Public Health Laboratory will test the dog if it shows signs of rabies while under quarantine.



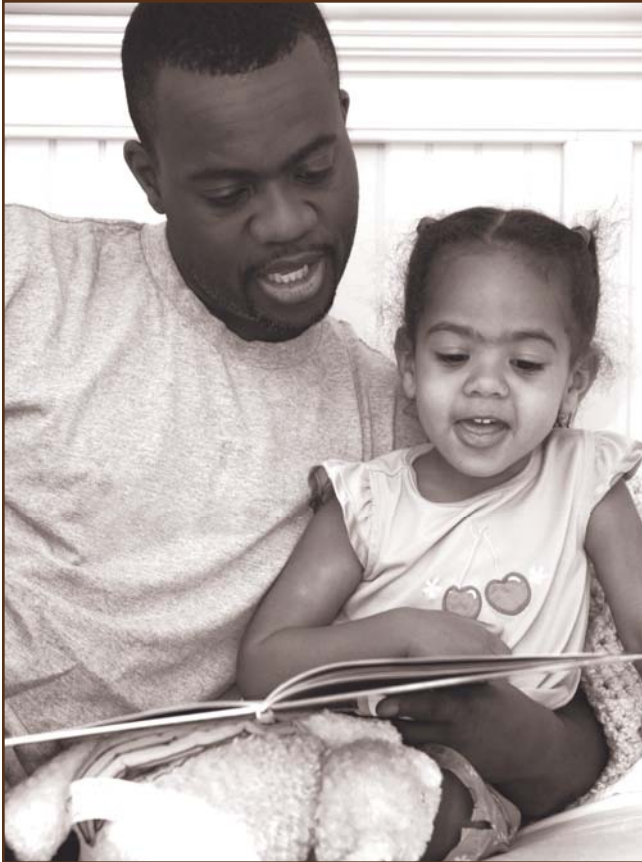
Tornado warnings issued

A band of tornadoes is on track to hit the central United States, which includes Missouri. Residents in your county are urged to take cover.

Local public health agencies have worked for years with emergency planners, hospitals and law enforcement to plan for tornadoes, floods, a terrorist attack and other disasters. Your family can learn how to get ready too. State and local public health agencies list three steps to prepare and the emergency supplies you may need at:

health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3

9:00 p.m.



Bedtime

While you sleep, on-duty staff are ready to initiate the state and local response 24/7 to outbreaks of disease, environmental public health emergencies and natural and man-made disasters. Throughout the day and night, public health is there to promote, prevent and protect the health of everyone in Missouri.



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services
P.O. Box 570
Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER
Services provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

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